

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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MC-02 OMB-01 ACDA-05 EB-07 /076 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4746

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 24774

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, US, ASEAN

SUBJ: COORDINATION OF MAP AS MEANS OF ENCOURAGING MILITARY

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN ASEAN

REF: JAKARTA 14369

SUMMARY: PROSPECTS FOR MAP GRANT AID OVER NEXT FEW YEARS AND PERHAPS EVEN FOR FMS CREDITS APPEAR TO BE DECLINING. THERE MAY BE MERIT TO DISCUSSION AT FORTHCOMING CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE OF COORDINATION OF INDIVIDUAL MAP PROGRAMS IN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES IN PARTICULAR TO PROMOTE GENERAL NATIONAL AND ASEAN SELF-RELIANCE IN PRODUCTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND MUNITIONS. THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI FAVORS THIS CONCEPT AND SAYS THAILAND WILL RAISE IT AT THE SEAN SUMMIT MEETING. THIS TELEGRAM EXAMINES SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES IN A VERY PRELIMINARY FASHION AND INVITES COMMENTS FROM THE ADDRESSEES ON THE CONCEPT. END SUMMARY.

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1. AMONG POSSIBLE SUBJECTS THAT COULD PROFITABLY BE EX-

PLORED AT FORTHCOMING CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE IN HONOLULU MIGHT BE THE COORDINATION OF MAP IN THE FIVE ASEAN COUNTRIES OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS AS A MEANS OF ENCOURAGING GREATER MILITARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

2. AS WE LOOK AHEAD OVER NEXT FEW YEARS, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THERE IS A DECREASING LIKELIHOOD THAT THERE WILL BE SIZABLE GRANT MAP FUNDS MUCH LONGER. THERE HAS BEEN GROWING CRITICISM IN U.S. CONGRESS OF MILITARY SALES ABROAD AS BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS. THERE IS THEREFORE SOME DOUBT THAT EVEN FMS CREDITS WILL BE AVAILABLE INDEFINITELY. DURING REMAINING YEARS WHEN GRANT MAP FUNDS AND FMS CREDITS ARE AVAILABLE, QUESTION IS WHETHER U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE SERVED BY OUR COORDINATING OUR MAP ACTIVITIES IN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WITH PURPOSE OF ENSURING MAXIMUM EFFECTIVE USE AS THESE PROGRAMS DRAW TO A CLOSE.

3. UP TO THIS POINT MAP HAS TENDED TO BE A NEGOTIATION BETWEEN U.S. AGENCIES ON ONE HAND AND NATIONAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS AND GOVERNMENTS ON OTHER HAND IN ESSENTIALLY WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS. AS RESULT, IN PART, DEVELOPMENT OF GREATER SELF-RELIANCE IN ASEAN AS A WHOLE (PARTICULARLY IN MANUFACTURE OF SMALL ARMS AND MUNITIONS WHICH THE SEVERAL ASEAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS CAN USE WITHOUT ANY FURTHER U.S. ASSISTANCE OR DIRECTION) HAS RECEIVED LITTLE OR NO EMPHASIS.

4. THAI PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION, BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY, THAT AFTER YEARS OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE THAILAND REMAINS SUBSTANTIALLY DEPENDENT ON U.S. FOR PROVISION OF SMALL ARMS AND MANY TYPES OF RELATED MUNITIONS. WE HAVE SOUGHT TO SET RECORD STRAIGHT BY PREPARING BRIEFING PACKET OUTLINING COMPLETED AND ONGOING PROJECTS AND MAP TRAINING PROGRAM WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THAI MILITARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY. MOREOVER, WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE RELATIVELY MODEST REQUIREMENTS OF THAILAND FOR SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION MAKE IT IMPSSIBLE TO ATTAIN ECONOMIES OF SCALE IF PRODUCTION IS FOR THAILAND ONLY. WE HAVE

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SUGGESTED THAT THAI MIGHT EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF SHARING-OUT PRODUCTION OF SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES, AS POTENTIAL MARKET MIGHT JUSTIFY CONSTRUCTION OF FACTORIES IN SEVERAL NUMBER NATIONS AND REASONABLE UNIT COSTS OF PRODUCTION.

5. THIS POINT APPEARS TO BE HAVING SOME IMPACT, BOTH ON THAI AND ON OTHER ASEAN LEADERS. IN CONVERSATION WITH

AMBASSADOR NOVEMBER 21, THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THAILAND DEVELOP GREATER CAPACITY TO PRODUCE ESSENTIAL ARMAMENTS. WHEN AMBASSADOR RAISED PROBLEM OF RELATIVELY LIMITED THAI REQUIREMENTS LEADING TO HIGH UNIT COSTS, CHATCHAI SAID THAT RTG WAS FULLY AWARE OF THIS FACT AND ADDED THAT HE WOULD RAISE THIS PROBLEM AT THE FORTHCOMING ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING TO FIND A REGIONAL SOLUTION. PLAYING BACK POINTS WE HAVE MADE TO HIM AND HIS STAFF IN THE PAST, CHATCHAI SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE ASEAN NATIONS STANDARDIZE THEIR WEAPONS AND THAT, AS A GROUP, THEY MOVE TOWARD GREATER SELF-SUFFICIENCY. HE SAID THT IF U.S. FIRM WERE SET UP IN THAILAND TO PRODUCE AMMUNITION, THAILAND WOULD ALLOW THIS FIRM TO EXPORT TO ASEAN AND OTHER NATIONS. HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF ASEAN WOULD BE WILLING TO BUY CERTAIN TYPES OF AMMUNITION AND WEAPONRY FROM PLANTS LOCATED IN THAILAND.

6. WE NOTE IN REFTTEL THAT RECENT RAZAK-SUHARTO MEETING IN MEDAN TOUCHED ON NEED FOR GREATER EXCHANGES OF INTELLIGENCE, JOINT PLANNING AND STANDARDIZATION OF WEAPONS WITHIN ASEAN AND DEVELOPMENT OF GREATER QTE NATIONAL RESILIENCE END QTE AMONG ITS MEMBERS.

7. APPEARS TO THIS EMBASSY THAT CONCEPT OF DEVELOPING GREATER MILITARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY WITHIN ASEAN DESERVES CAREFUL STUDY. IF IDEA HAS THE MERIT WE SEE IN IT, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO INCLUDE SUPPORT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL ARMS FACTORIES IN MAP FOR VARIOUS ASEAN COUNTRIES OVER REMAINING YEARS OF PROGRAM.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 24774

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8. CLEARLY, ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD FIRST HAVE TO AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH CONCEPT. ON THE ONE HAND, IT WOULD TEND TO INCREASE INTERDEPENDENCE OF ASEAN MEMBERS, IT WOULD DEVELOP THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE QTE RESILIENCY END QTE, AS THE INDONESIANS USE THE TERM, AND IT MIGHT HELP U.S. TO BRING LONG-STANDING MAP TO A CLOSE WITH A FLOURISH, LEAVING A SENSE OF SATISFACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT AMONG ASEAN MEMBERS. AS ASEAN COUNTRIES LOOK TO THE UNCERTAINTIES PORTENDED BY THE POST-INDOCHINA WAR SITUATION, AND WITH SUBSTANTIAL QUESTIONS REMAINING ABOUT U.S. INTENTIONS TVER THE LONGER TERM TOWARDS THIS REGION OF THE WORLD, GREATER MILITARY INTEGRATION MAY APPEAL TO THEM.

9. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE AWARE OF REAL PROBLEMS. U.S. ARMS MANUFACTURERS HAVE USUALLY PREFERRED TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS RATHER THAN TO ENGAGE IN CO-PRODUCTION OR TO ENCOURAGE THE FOREIGN PRODUCTION OF ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR PRODUCTS. WE DO NOT RPT NOT KNOW WHAT U.S. POLICY WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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BE ON THIS MATTER.

10. MOREOVER, IT IS NOT RPT NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE ASEAN COUNTRIES ARE REALLY AT THE POINT WHERE THEY WILL WISH TO DEPEND ON EACH OTHER FOR MAJOR ITEMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND AMMUNITION. AT THE MOMENT, THERE IS SOME FRICTION BETWEEN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA OVER THE HANDLING OF THE MUSLIM SEPARATIST AND MALAYSIAN COMMUNIST INSURGENT GROUPS IN THE BORDER AREA BETWEEN THEM. THERE IS RELATIVELY LIMITED, BUT STILL SIGNIFICANT TENSION BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND MALAYSIA OVER ALLEGED MALAYSIAN SUPPORT FOR MUSLIM SEPARATISTS IN THE SOUTHWESTERN PHILIPPINES. IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT PAST, INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA, THE QTE QUARRELING BROTHERS END QTE, TO USE AMBASSADOR UNDERHILL'S PHRASE, WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS OVER THE "CONFRONTATION" ISSUE, AND THE PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIA WERE CLEARLY ON OPPOSITE SIDES AT THE TIME OF THE UPRISING AGAINST THE SUKARNO GOVERNMENT IN SUMATRA AND CELEBES IN 1958-60.

UNFORTUNATELY, ITEMS THAT MIGHT BE PRODUCED ON AN INTEGRATED ASEAN BASIS WOULD BE PRECISELY THOSE ITEMS THEY COULD BEST USE AGAINST EACH OTHER. ASEAN IS GROWING AND DEVELOPING ONLY SLOWLY FOR A GOOD REASON: THERE ARE STILL CONSIDERABLE DOUBTS AND RESERVATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTNERS. THERE IS NOT YET A CLEAR CONSENSUS THAT THERE IS A SECURITY ROLE FOR ASEAN TO PLAY.

11. FROM A NARROW U.S. POINT OF VIEW, TO THE EXTENT THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES BECOME MILITARILY MORE SELF-RELIANT IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION OF SIGNIFICANT ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT, THE U.S. WOULD TEND TO LOSE SOME OF THE LEVERAGE WE NOW HAVE. BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MAP PROVIDE US WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXERT POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON A RANGE OF NATIONAL POLICIES.

12. WE WILL NOT AT THIS POINT GO INTO THE MECHANICS OF IMPLEMENTING SUCH A CONCEPT. THERE IS A MECHANICAL PROBLEM INVOLVED IN WHETHER THE MAP WOULD CONTINUE TO BE BILATERALLY PROGRAMMED. WE ASSUME THE MAP SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE BILATERALLY PROGRAMMED, BUT WITH A PORTION OF IT IN EACH ASEAN COUNTRY SEGMENT EARMARKED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES WHICH WOULD PRODUCE ITEMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.
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MENT AND MUNITIONS WHICH OTHER ASEAN MEMBERS WOULD COMMIT THEMSELVES TO PURCHASE. WE COULD MAKE USE OF SUCH AN ASEAN SEGMENT CONTINGENT ON OVERALL ASEAN AGREEMENT, WITH CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES FOLLOWING AS A CONSEQUENCE.

13. REGARDING TIMING, DATE OF ASEAN SUMMIT CONFERENCE IS NOT YET FIRM BUT COULD TAKE PLACE AT ABOUT SAME TIME AS CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE. POSSIBLE ASEAN SUMMIT CONFERENCE DECISION TO COORDINATE DEFENSE PRODUCTION AND PROCUREMENT WOULD BE EVIDENCE OF THE KIND OF ASEAN SUPPORT REFERRED TO IN PARA 8 ABOVE.

14. WE INVITE THE COMMENTS OF ADDRESSEE POSTS ON FOREGOING AS A PRELUDE TO POSSIBLE FURTHER DISCUSSION AT COM CONFERENCE.
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